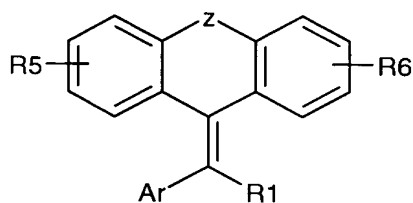


**Amendments to the Claims**

We Claim:

1. (Original) A compound of the formula:

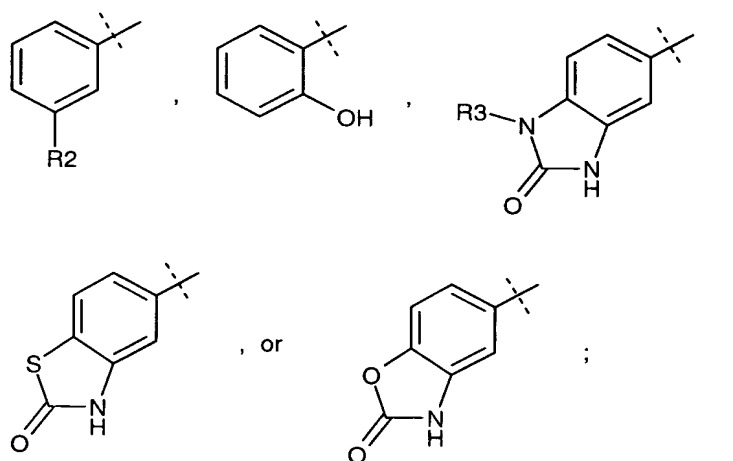


Formula I

wherein,

Z represents CH<sub>2</sub>, S, or O;

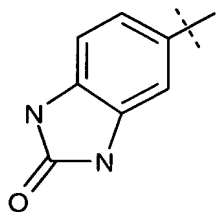
Ar represents a group of the formula:



R<sup>1</sup> represents hydrogen or (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>)alkyl;

R<sup>2</sup> represents hydroxy, amino, (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>)alkoxy, NH SO<sub>2</sub>R<sup>4</sup>, provided that where R<sup>2</sup> represents hydroxy then Z is other than S

R<sup>3</sup> represents hydrogen, (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>)alkyl, heterocycle, substituted heterocycle, (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>)alkyl-heterocycle, or (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>)alkyl-substituted heterocycle, provided that where Ar represents:



then Z is other than O;

R<sup>4</sup> represents independently at each occurrence (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>)alkyl;

R<sup>5</sup> and R<sup>6</sup> represent independently at each occurrence hydrogen, halo, amino, cyano, hydroxy, (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>)alkyl, halo(C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>)alkyl, (C<sub>3</sub>-C<sub>7</sub>)cycloalkyl, (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>)alkoxy, (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>)alkyl-(C<sub>3</sub>-C<sub>7</sub>)cycloalkyl, (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>)alkoxy-(C<sub>3</sub>-C<sub>7</sub>)cycloalkyl, NHR<sup>7</sup>, N(R<sup>7</sup>)<sub>2</sub>, NHSO<sub>2</sub>R<sup>7</sup>, SR<sup>7</sup>, SO<sub>2</sub>R<sup>7</sup>; and

R<sup>7</sup> represents independently at each occurrence (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>)alkyl, (C<sub>3</sub>-C<sub>7</sub>)cycloalkyl, phenyl, or heterocycle;  
or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

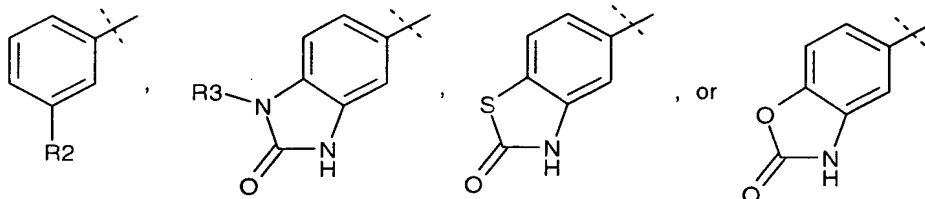
2. (Currently Amended) The compound according to Claim 1 wherein R<sup>1</sup> represents hydrogen, ~~methyl~~ methyl or ethyl.

3. (Original) The compound according to Claim 2 wherein R<sup>1</sup> represents hydrogen.

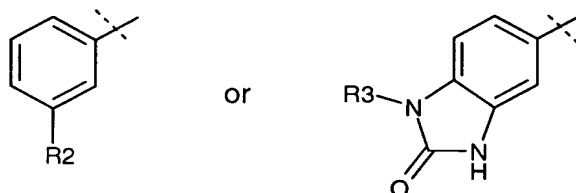
4. (Currently Amended) The compound according to ~~any one of Claims 1-3~~ Claim 1 wherein Z represents S or O.

5. (Original) The compound according to Claim 4 wherein Z represent S.

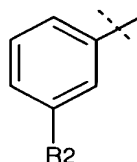
6. (Currently Amended) The compound according to ~~any one of Claims 1-5~~ Claim 1 wherein Ar represents a group of the formula:



7. (Original) The compound according to Claim 6 wherein Ar represents a group of the formula:

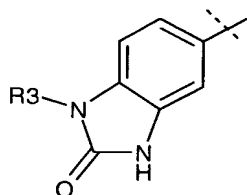


8. (Original) The compound according to Claim 7 wherein Ar represents a group of the formula:



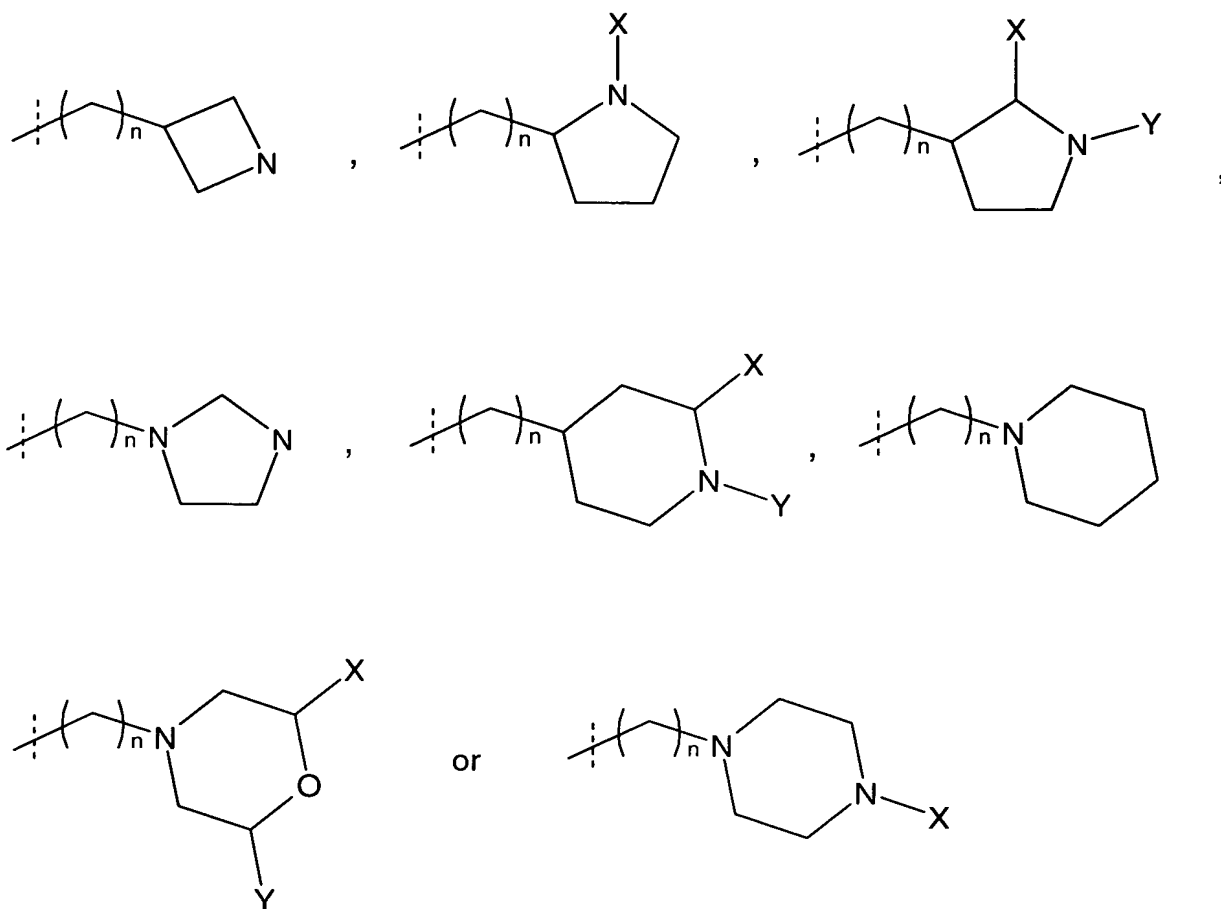
9. (Original) The compound according to Claim 8 wherein R<sub>2</sub> represents hydroxy, (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>)alkoxy, or NH SO<sub>2</sub>R<sup>4</sup>.

10. (Original) The compound according to Claim 7 wherein Ar represents a group of the formula:



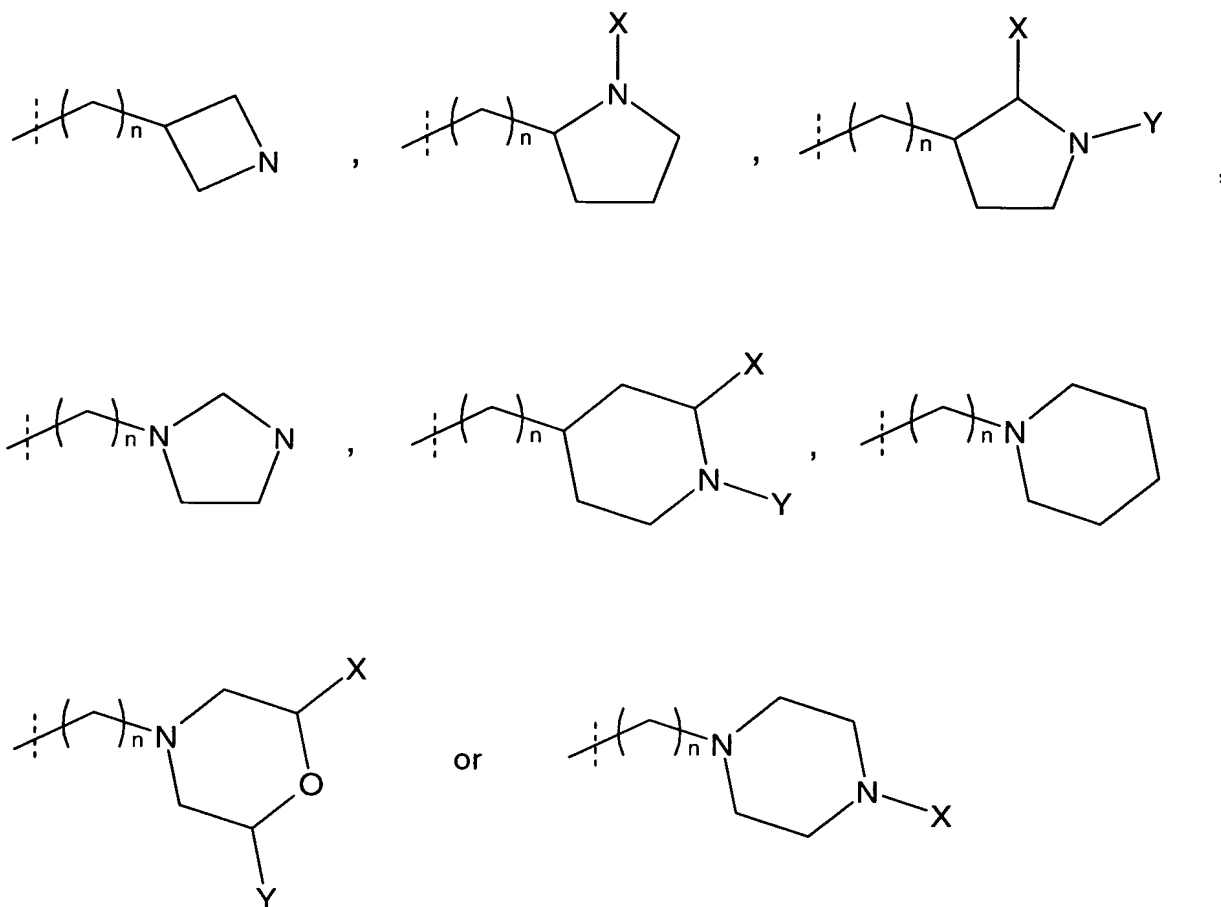
11. (Original) The compound according to Claim 10 wherein R<sub>3</sub> represents hydrogen, methyl, ethyl, isopropyl, heterocycle, substituted heterocycle, (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>)alkyl-heterocycle, (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>)alkyl-substituted heterocycle.

12. (Original) The compound according to Claim 11 wherein R<sub>3</sub> represents hydrogen, methyl, ethyl, isopropyl, or a group of the formula:



wherein  $n$  represents 0-3 and  $X$  and  $Y$  each independently represents at each occurrence hydrogen, methyl, or ethyl.

13. (Original) The compound according to Claim 11 wherein  $R_3$  represents hydrogen, methyl, ethyl, isopropyl, or a group of the formula:



wherein n represents 0-3 and X and Y each independently represents at each occurrence methyl or ethyl.

14. (Currently Amended) The compound according to ~~any one of Claims 1-13~~Claim 9 wherein R<sup>4</sup> ~~represents~~represents methyl or ethyl.

15. (Currently Amended) The compound according to ~~any one of Claims 1-14~~Claim 1 wherein R<sup>5</sup> and R<sup>6</sup> represent independently at each occurrence hydrogen, halo, hydroxy, halo(C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>)alkyl, (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>)alkoxy, (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>)alkyl-(C<sub>3</sub>-C<sub>7</sub>)cycloalkyl, (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>)alkoxy-(C<sub>3</sub>-C<sub>7</sub>)cycloalkyl, NHR<sup>7</sup>, or N(R<sup>7</sup>)<sub>2</sub>.

16. (Original) The compound according to Claim 15 wherein R<sup>5</sup> and R<sup>6</sup> represent independently at each occurrence hydrogen, fluoro, chloro, hydroxy, difluoromethyl,

trifluoromethyl, (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>)alkoxy, (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>)alkyl-(C<sub>3</sub>-C<sub>7</sub>)cycloalkyl, (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>)alkoxy-(C<sub>3</sub>-C<sub>7</sub>)cycloalkyl, NHR<sup>7</sup>, or N(R<sup>7</sup>)<sub>2</sub> wherein R<sup>7</sup> represents independently at each occurrence (C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>)alkyl or (C<sub>3</sub>-C<sub>7</sub>)cycloalkyl.

17. (Original) The compound according to Claim 16 wherein R<sup>5</sup> and R<sup>6</sup> represent independently at each occurrence hydrogen or fluoro.

18. (Currently Amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising the compound according to ~~any one of Claims 1-17~~Claim 1 in combination with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, diluent, or excipient.

19. (Currently Amended) A method of treating a disorder selected from the group consisting of Conn's Syndrome, primary and secondary hyperaldosteronism, increased sodium retention, increased magnesium and potassium excretion (diuresis), increased water retention, hypertension (isolated systolic and combined systolic/diastolic), arrhythmias, myocardial fibrosis, myocardial infarction, Bartter's Syndrome, disorders associated with excess catecholamine levels, diastolic and systolic congestive heart failure (CHF), peripheral vascular disease, diabetic nephropathy, cirrhosis with edema and ascites, esophageal varices, Addison's Disease, muscle weakness, increased melanin pigmentation of the skin, weight loss, hypotension, hypoglycemia, Cushing's Syndrome, obesity, hypertension, glucose intolerance, hyperglycemia, diabetes mellitus, osteoporosis, polyuria, polydipsia, inflammation, autoimmune disorders, tissue rejection associated with organ transplant, malignancies such as leukemias and lymphomas, acute adrenal insufficiency, congenital adrenal hyperplasia, rheumatic fever, polyarteritis nodosa, granulomatous polyarteritis, inhibition of myeloid cell lines, immune proliferation/apoptosis, HPA axis suppression and regulation, hypercortisolemia, modulation of the Th1/Th2 cytokine balance, chronic kidney disease, stroke and spinal cord injury, hypercalcemia, hyperglycemia, acute adrenal insufficiency, chronic primary adrenal insufficiency, secondary adrenal insufficiency, congenital adrenal hyperplasia, cerebral edema, thrombocytopenia, and Little's syndrome, systemic inflammation, inflammatory bowel disease, systemic lupus erythematosus, discoid lupus erythematosus, polyarthritis nodosa, Wegener's granulomatosis, giant cell arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, hay fever, allergic rhinitis, contact dermatitis, atopic dermatitis, exfoliative dermatitis, urticaria, angioneurotic edema, chronic obstructive

pulmonary disease, asthma, tendonitis, bursitis, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, autoimmune chronic active hepatitis, hepatitis, cirrhosis, inflammatory scalp alopecia, panniculitis, psoriasis, inflamed cysts, pyoderma gangrenosum, pemphigus vulgaris, bullous pemphigoid, dermatomyositis, eosinophilic fasciitis, relapsing polychondritis, inflammatory vasculitis, sarcoidosis, Sweet's disease, type 1 reactive leprosy, capillary hemangiomas, lichen planus, erythema nodosum, acne, hirsutism, toxic epidermal necrolysis, erythema, multiform, cutaneous T-cell lymphoma, psychoses, cognitive disorders, memory disturbances, mood disorders, depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, and personality disorders, comprising administering to a patient in need thereof a compound as claimed in ~~any one of Claims 1-17~~Claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Currently Amended) The method according to ~~Claim 20~~Claim 19 wherein the disorder is diastolic or systolic congestive heart failure, inflammation, or rheumatoid arthritis.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Cancelled)